



What animal welfare brought to ethology

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ABSTRACTS

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gave a choice between pairs of shelters to 10 males and 10 females. Combinations of seven different shelter types were used. Both genders seemed to prefer an ABS pipe closed at one end (15.2 cm x 7.6 cm) to nesting under a 35cm wheel. There were tendencies for both genders to choose a closed pipe over a long open pipe and the females tended to prefer the closed pipe to an aluminium cover. Light intensity and experience did not seem to have an effect on choice. Overall, the closed pipe seemed to be preferred over the other options so a recommendation to include it as environmental enrichment could be made, noting that this type is easy to clean as well as fairly inexpensive.

What animal welfare brought to ethology

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The concern for animal welfare stems from the acknowledgement that they are sentient beings, capable of emotions and suffering. Animal welfare was scientifically studied from the 70's by applied ethologists. They identified behavioural needs, assessed animal preferences, compared the behaviour of animals in natural environments vs. in confinement, analysed physiological stress responses, etc. By doing so, applied ethologists, probably not as much bound to the framework of the discipline their work was derived from (ie ethology), borrowed concepts from psychology to describe the internal emotional states of animals. The use of these concepts was first considered as anthropomorphic and outside the realm of behavioural science. It turned out that when tested in appropriate settings such concepts could greatly help our understanding of animals. In addition, animal welfare made applied ethologists concentrate on the mechanisms rather than the functions of behaviour, and has moved on to investigate new questions: To what extent are various animal species capable of emotions? How does an animal perceive its environment? How can we assess the welfare of an animal? What are the impacts of the situations to which we expose animals in terms of animal welfare? Therefore applied ethology brought both concepts related to internal mental states and specific questions that we believe can cast a new light on animal behaviour studies, complementing more traditional approaches of animal ethology.